

MERCATOR:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Saturday, February 6. to Tuesday, February 9. 1713.

HAVING thus long employ'd this Paper in Detecting the Cavils and Objections of our prejudiced Opposers, and laid down the Reasonableness and Advantages of the French Trade, there remains One thing necessary to speak to in its course; (viz.) To enquire, whether the present Treaty of Commerce is, or is not qualified and adapted to render this Trade so Advantageous, as we have alledged; whether all, that we ought to expect for our Advantage in Trade, is actually stipulated and provided for in the Treaty or no; and to explain those Conditions, and show how, and wherein they are so qualified.

But as the time is at Hand, when this shall be more fully Debated in the great Assembly of Parliament, the *MERCATOR* likewise defers the Discouraging of it to that time, when he hopes to be heard with Impartiality; and that what he shall say to this purpose shall be immediately applyed to the End, for which it shall be spoken.

In the mean time, there is a mighty Objection started by a Sett of Men, who not so much for their Country's Interest, as because they are embark'd in the Wine Trade to Portugal, have settled Houses, as they call them, at Lisbon and Oporto, and have felt the Sweetness of the Portugal Trade to their own private Purposes, would fain persuade the World to believe, that This is the Trade, which alone ought to be maintain'd, that it is the most gainful Trade to the Nation, that the whole Portugal Trade will be ruin'd, if this Treaty goes on, that our Manufactures will be all Prohibited in Portugal, that we are Perfidious and Breakers of a solemn Treaty, and that we are bound by the strongest Tyes of both Honour and Interest to preserve the Portugal Treaty entire; with much more of this kind.

The *MERCATOR* has already given a Reason, which no Man ever has or can answer, why this Portugal Treaty ought not to have been made, and also proving it void in its own Nature, and therefore not binding to the British Nation; (viz.) Because pretending to Limit the Legislature by the Prerogative, it is inconsistent with the Constitution.

The *MERCATOR* has proved, that the Condition of Breaking it is express'd in the Treaty it self; (viz.) That then it shall be lawful to the King of Portugal AGAIN to Prohibit all our Woollen Manufactures *Ceteraq; Britannica Lanificia*, which were Prohibited before; which was no more than our Woollen Cloths only: These Things are clear and plain.

There remains some other Things to be said to this Case, by which the *MERCATOR* believes, all the Force of this Clamour about the Treaty with Portugal will be effectually answer'd, and the just Ground of it taken away.

It is plainly proved, as before, that tho' this is a Treaty actually Signed and made, and therefore, as they say, ought to be kept, yet that the Parliament is not, nor can be bound by it.

But what if the *MERCATOR* should prove, that this Treaty was no sooner made and executed on both, but that the Portuguese broke it: If this appears, it is hoped these Men will own, that the King of Portugal having not perform'd his part, we are no longer bound to our part.

After this, because there is so loud an Outcry raised of the Portuguese Interrupting our Commerce and Prohibiting our Woollen Manufactures in Portugal for our breaking this Clause; What if the King of Portugal, being made sensible of the Reason and Justice of it, and the small or no Injury it will be to the Trade of his Country, should Throw us in the Clause, and consent, that we should make such an Equality of Duties between his Wines and French, as the Treaty with France provides; Where would all our Clamouring People be then?

After this, what if it should appear, that notwithstanding the Equality of Duties, the Importation of Portugal Wines will still be very little less than it was before, and that the King of Portugal shall be found to be no Loser, or very little, by the Alteration?

And lastly; What if it should appear, that in the Portugal Trade we have already more Inequalities on our Side to the Disadvantage of our Trade, than in any other Nation in the World, from whence we bring Wines; (viz.) That we lay less Duties on their Goods, and they lay more Duties on Ours, than any other Nation in the World from whence, as I say, we fetch Wines?

If all these Things are true, neither will the King of Portugal see Reason to scruple our making the Treaty with France; neither have any Obligation upon us not to do it.

The *MERCATOR* reserving a time again to speak to the Inconsistency of the Portugal Treaty with
our

Commitment, and to prove it void in its own
 nature; and that he that made it, had he been living,
 ought to have answer'd for it; Reserving a liberty of
 calling it a *Felonious Treaty*, in the Sense formerly men-
 tioned; begins now with the proof of the King of
 Portugal's having contraven'd the Stipulations of this
 Treaty, and broken it as soon as made: And in order
 to this, the following Letter is added here, which has
 been sent some time, and was mentioned to have been
 received in *MERCATOR*, No. 105. The Author
 the *MERCATOR* really does not know, for it is not
 his practise, as it appears to be in others, to write Let-
 ters to himself, and then call them by other Peoples
 Names, but the Original is left, as it is of all he pub-
 lishes in this manner, with the Printer, for any one to
 see that pleases.

To the Author of the Mercator.

S I R.

THE only Objection made by many People to
 the Treaty of Commerce with France, at least
 the material one, is, That it Interferes with that of
 Portugal, made by Mr. Methven in 1703. You have
 sometimes made mention of the latter; and the
 Paper called the *British-Merchant*, No. 2. pretends
 to give us a Copy of it: Now let us suppose, that
 that Copy is a true one, and that it ought to be
 inviolably observed; if so, 'tis strange to me, that
 we have not had ere now, many Clamours about
 the Portuguese's Infringement of it, and that from
 the very time almost that it was made, and in the
 most essential Article of it; for I can hardly yet
 be perswaded, that our Party-Feuds have blinded us
 to that degree, as to fancy, that it is binding on us,
 and on Portugal not.

The Case is this: In 1703. all foreign Colour'd
 Cloths (but no other Woollen Manufacture) were
 Prohibited in Portugal: Mr. Methven makes a Tre-
 aty with that Court to take off the Prohibition on
 British Cloth, on Condition that Portuguese Wines
 shall pay in England a Third less Duties than the
 French; here you see, we give them an Equivalent
 for the taking off the Prohibition on our Cloths,
 and they us, for our keeping up the Duties of
 French Wine above theirs. Now allowing this
 Treaty to be just, and rightly Calculated for the

Interest of both Kingdoms. (viz.) For the better
 Consumption of our Clothes in Portugal, and their
 Wines in England; and my Complaint is, that the
 Court of Portugal, greatly to our prejudice, have
 Infringed not only the most essential Article of it,
 but the very Intent and Tenure of the Treaty it
 self, and that almost as soon as it was made; for
 in a very little time afterward, they not only took
 off the Prohibition on British Cloths, which the
 Treaty obliged them to do, and for which we gave
 them an Equivalent, but they took off the Prohi-
 bition also on Dutch, French, and all other Cloths,
 and that without any Equivalent: Now there is
 nothing more apparent, than that the Intent of the
 Treaty was to encourage the Vent of our Cloth in
 Portugal, exclusive of other Nations (for its hoped
 we are not so much Infatuated as to say, we gave an
 Equivalent for the Dutch, French, &c.) but if not-
 withstanding this Agreement, the Portuguese put
 other Nations Cloth upon the same Foot as ours,
 I think there is no Reason of Complaint, if we level
 the Duties of French Wine with theirs. If this
 Hint be worth your Notice, you'll please to examine
 further into the Matter, and I can assure you, you'll
 find what is here related to be true in Fact; and I
 believe it may be affirmed, there has gone at least
 a Third part as many Dutch as English Cloths to Por-
 tugal since the Prohibition was taken off.

December 24.

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